
The Arrow Exercise

A few months ago my spirit guides had me practice an exercise they came up with. I worked at a really busy restaurant at the time and had absolutely no patience with people who were rude and obnoxious. Over a four-day work week at my job as a server they got me to practice this exercise, and it ended up being one of the most beautiful experiences of my life.

Before this year, I was really sensitive and shy and never saw any reason to be abrupt or short with anyone. In my mind it was always necessary to be polite, and people who weren't capable of that confused and angered me. It never dawned on me that I could change the entire dynamic of a conversation simply by not reacting emotionally to what the person said, or to what I was witnessing.

My guides suggested I see a person's rudeness as little arrows going up and around me. I could react however I wanted externally but internally or emotionally all I had to do was "not react." So this is why I am calling this exercise: The Arrow Exercise. I won't go into all that happened because it's such a long story, but the week my Guides had me work with this was one of the best weeks of my life. This is an abbreviated version of what happened ...

I prided myself on being a fast and friendly server and I asked my guides why some people always only left 10 or 15%. As a server I had this little mental checklist of things that I would never do if I was the one being waited on. This list consisted of simple things like not asking for a refill after someone at my table had just got one, or asking two or three times for different dressings. My guides told me that people could energetically but internally feel the secret reaction and judgment I had for them when I walked away from the table. This stunned me. I had no idea at all that people could feel this stuff. My Guides said that because of the "secret judgment" I held, customers would not then go that extra mile of leaving more of a tip or paying me a compliment.

They said that often people who behave rudely or lash out don't even know why they do this, and that by simply not reacting, I was reflecting some badly-needed innocence back to them. This amazed me as well, and it was beautiful. They said that some people have never felt their own innocence in their entire life and all I had to do to give this to them was not react.

The rest of my time as a server at that particular restaurant was short but fun, purely because of this exercise. People were complimenting my service left and right, and even after they paid and left, they would seek out one of our managers and pull them aside to tell them what good service I had provided. I had been waiting on and off on some of these tables, randomly, for eight years and they had never even noticed me before. My secret resentment made it impossible for them. Yet now they were not only noticing me, but complimenting me as well. Also, the same people who left 10 or 15% tips in previous years were literally throwing money at me and asking me many questions about myself, which had also never occurred before. It was awesome!

My Guides impressed upon me that this exercise really does work and should be applied to ANYTHING that causes a negative reaction - the news, politics, stories of cruelty to animals or people, and so on. I love animals and often go on ASPCA.com types of websites and they sometimes have “before and after” pictures of the animal and their story. My Guides asked me to no longer react to these stories and said that I was to see the animal and the abuser as an equation. Both parts of this equation had to be innocent.

They said that to react with sadness or grief is the most disrespectful thing you can do for any being who is suffering, because it energetically adds to their suffering. They explained that not reacting to the abuse reflects the abuser’s innocence back to them in real time. They also said that sometimes - not always, but sometimes - even if the abuse happened years before, if you can reflect innocence back to the troubled individual, then that can be enough to stop a pattern of abuse.

Now I had been practicing not reacting for a few months then, and not reacting is completely different than denying something. Denying actually causes suffering and is disrespectful to the animal or situation. So my Guides gave me this little prayer to say to assist in sending love and healing to the situation. “Being of light, I see not your story and know you only as the powerful one that you are.” You too can use this prayer, and it certainly does assist me to not react in challenging situations.

I'm now friends with some of the people who were the rudest to me in the past because I have the ability to react, or not, to what they do. This in turn allows me to choose whether or not I want to cultivate a friendship, whereas this would never have happened in the past.

This exercise is also really helpful to relieve and rid yourself of accumulated emotion. My Guides say that by not reacting now to something, you are actually healing stored, toxic emotional build-up from previous, stressful interactions that may have occurred years ago.

To do this exercise, you simply:

- Choose to see the person's behavior/news story/animal or human abuse as little arrows going up and around you. You can react externally however you want, but internally/emotionally don't let the situation get to you. You don't even have to practice forgiveness in that moment. In fact, it is almost impossible to forgive in real time, at a time when your feelings are hurt. The forgiveness will come later, and it will come big time.
- Know that anything that anyone else does or says is THEIR business. It does not concern you. This is radical! Even if they are screaming insults at you, or have done something hurtful to you now or in the past, it is their business, their behavior. They are projecting on you, so don't take it personally because it is their issue. This will come in really handy and make much more sense the more you work with it.
- Ask yourself if you can let go of being right in the moment. Trust me, peace is much more fun, and the more you experience it, the more you will crave it.

I love you guys so much. Good luck with practicing - I know you'll do great.